

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 AEC-11 DRC-01 /180 W

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R 111130Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4599

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0470

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI XO US UK MP

SUBJECT: JOURNALISTS VISITS TO DIEGO GARCIA

REF: (A) STATE 120962; (B) STATE 100897

1. DEPT'S AGREEMENT WITH BRITS FOR REASONS GIVEN IN REF (A) TO POSTPONE DIEGO VISIT BY JOURNALISTS AT LEAST UNTIL END JULY SUITS US FINE. GOM, PARTICULARLY PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF, WOULD PROBABLY PREFER LEAST POSSIBLE PRESS ATTENTION TO DIEGO AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

2. IF DEPT. LATER DECIDES WITH BRITS THAT SUCH VISIT MUST BE LAID ON, WE WOULD NATURALLY HOPE VISITORS COULD BE LIMITED TO RELATIVELY FRIENDLY, CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISTS FROM US AND UK, AND RESULTING STORIES WOULD EMPHASIZE RELATIVELY MODEST SIZE AND LIMITATIONS OF PROJECTED EXPANSION.

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3. TO PUT IT MILDLY, LOCAL PRESS NOT NOTED FOR RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM

NOT NECESSARILY OUT OF MALICE; BUT GIVEN NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS
VYING FOR LIMITED READERSHIP, EACH ONE IS TEMPTED TOWARD ITS OWN
SENSATIONALISTIC SLANT. IF MAURITIAN PRESSMAN TO BE INCLUDED IN
SUCH VISIT, RESULTS LIKELY TO BE MORE TROUBLESOME THAN HELPFUL
LOCALLY.

4. IF AND WHEN ANY JOURNALISTS VISIT TO DIEGO TAKES PLACE, LOCAL
PRESS ATTENTION WILL NO DOUBT BE PIQUED. IF SUCH VISIT LIMITED
TO US-UK PRESS REPS, LOCAL PRESS REQUESTS TO JOIN PARTY COULD
PROBABLY BE FENDED OFF. BUT, IF JOURNALISTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES
IN AREA WERE TO BE INCLUDED IN VISIT, NOT ONLY LOCAL PRESS BUT
POSSIBLY GOM ITSELF, MIGHT GET THEIR NOSES OUT OF JOINT AND PUSH
TO INCLUDE SOME VARIETY OF LOCAL REPORTERS. THIS COULD PROVE
AWKWARD FOR US TO RESIST HERE BECAUSE OF LONG HISTORICAL AND
LEGAL TIES BETWEEN MAURITIUS AND DIEGO, NOT TO MENTION NATURAL
POLITICAL/MILITARY INTEREST IN DIEGO HERE.

5. IN ANY EVENT, I WILL NEED TO BE IN POSITION TO DISCUSS THIS
DISCREETLY WITH PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE PRIOR TO ANY DECISION TO
ALLOW SUCH VISIT.

MANHARD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, JOURNALISTS, DIEGO GARCIA, MILITARY BASES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PORTL00470
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740150-0288
From: PORT LOUIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740656/aaaabvvk.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) STATE 120962; (B) STATE 100897
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOURNALISTS VISITS TO DIEGO GARCIA
TAGS: MILI, XO, US, UK, MP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005